

"Altar - Rations"

Text: Gen. 35:3,
"And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar
unto God, who answered me in ~~my~~ the day of my distress, and was with me
in the way which I went."

Scripture: Gen. 35:1-15

In the portion of the 35th chapter of Genesis ~~which~~ ^{which} we read as scripture,
Jacob is traveling from ~~xxxxxx~~ Shechem to ~~xxxxx~~ Hebron. He is traveling
to Bethel to fulfill a vow he had made approximately 20 years before.
If you recall the story it was when he was traveling from Beer-sheba toward
Haran. It is found in the 28th chapter of Genesis. He had come to a cer-
tain place and he stayed there overnight. He took a stone and used it for
a pillow and laid down to sleep. While he was asleep he dreamed a dream
in which he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of
God were going up and down this ladder. He awoke from his sleep and remarked
that God must be dwelling in this place, and that this was the very house
of God, and the gate to heaven. So he took the stone and set it up as a
pillar, and anointed it by pouring oil on the top of it. He named the
place Bethel, which means, "The House of God." In Hebrew, the word BETH
means house of, such as Bethlehem, which means House of Bread. And the
word El means "God". At different times the Jews used the word Elohim
which ~~xxxxxx~~ refers to the Divine Majesty of Almighty God. So Bethel, merely
means, "House of God." But then Jacob made a vow and said, "If God will be
with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to
eat, and raiment to ~~xxxxx~~ put on, so that I come again to my father's house
in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone which I have set
~~my~~ for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me
I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Gen. 28:20-22.

So now we find Jacob 20 years later, and he is commanded by God to go and
make an altar at Bethel, 35:1. Jacob orders his entire entourage, both
relatives and others to do away with all foreign gods, to be clean, and to
change their garments. Gen. 35:2. He tells them, (text: 35:3. So the
people turned over to Jacob the foreign gods, as well as their jewelry which

consisted of earrings, and Jacob buried them under an oak tree by Shechem.

we read that they traveled under the Divine protection of God, who caused the surrounding nations to be in terror so that they did not disturb

Jacob and his party as they journeyed through their territory. 35:5.

the Cananite city of its ~~NAME~~ ^{NAME}
Jacob arrived at Luz, which was the former ~~xxxxxxixxxxx~~ before Jacob named it Bethel. 35:6. And we read that Jacob built there an altar and

once again renamed the place. This time he called it El-Bethel, 35:7.

This now signifies that it is the God of the Place, rather than the place itself. So what El-Bethel really means is, "The God of the House of God."

Now from this story as well as from the previous stories of Jacob concerning the 20 years that have intervened, we can see that Jacob had been very richly blessed. He had made a vow to God, that he would serve God and render to Him what he rightfully owed God for the blessings he would receive. He had been living as it were on "Altar - Rations." The vow had been made before a makeshift altar, and God had kept His part of the bargain by feeding and clothing ~~xx~~ and blessing Jacob for these 20 years. All that God is requiring from Jacob now, is a remembering of the sacred oath he had taken.

I see in this story a parallel between our lives and the life of Jacob. we worship God here in this sanctuary or other sanctuaries if we are in other places perhaps. But I often wonder why people attend church. I know why we should but I question our motives for doing so. Some people say that is a habit they have ~~attained~~ acquired. Others say because they were brought to the church as children and never stopped attending. But I do not believe these are completely true and valid. I believe instead that we come because of a hunger that needs satisfied. I believe it is because we cannot get what we get from church attendance anywhere else. ~~We~~ can form all kinds of habits, but they do not affect us in the same way.

A man from this congregation summed it up this past week when he told me that the more he delves into the Word of God, the more he hungers for it.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
 BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA
 FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY JANUARY 12, 1975
 Rev. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
 Mrs. MARILYN STEPHENSON, ORGANIST
 Mr. RALPH GODPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
 RICKY VINROE, TERRY MCCLIMANS - ACOLYTES

ORDER FOR WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.

PRELUDE MUSIC: "FANTASY ON A GERMAN THEME" PEERY
 "OVER THE STARS" ABT

SILENT PRAYER

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 21 "JOYFUL, JOYFUL, WE ADORE THEE"

*ACRISPION - CHORAL AMEN

*EXHORTATION

*CONFESSION (IN UNISON) "CHRIST, WE ARE GLAD TO BE AN
 IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR KINGDOM, AND WE JOYFULLY ACCEPT
 THE CHALLENGE WHICH OUR MEMBERSHIP SETS BEFORE US. WE
 ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THAT CHALLENGE
 IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, IN ORDER TO SHARE OUR CONCERNS
 WITH YOU AND ONE ANOTHER IN CHRIST. JOIN US AS WE SEARCH
 OUR HEARTS AND WILLS, THAT WE MAY KNOW OUR SHORTCOMINGS.
 SEARCH OUR DESIRES AND AMBITIONS WITH US, THAT WE MAY KNOW
 IF THEY ARE PURE, SINCERE, AND WORTHY OF FULFILLMENT. ACCEPT
 OUR HONEST SEARCHINGS AS OUR CONFESSION IN CHRIST. AMEN."

*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)

*ASSURANCE OF PAROON - CHORAL AMEN

*PRAISE

*PASTOR: 'O LORD OPEN OUR LIPS.

*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE

*DOXOLOGY No. 551

SCRIPTURE LESSON: GENESIS 35: 1-15

HYMN No. 121 "BRIGHTEST AND BEST OF THE SONS OF THE MORNING"

*AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (APOSTLES' CREED)

*GLORIA PATRI

*CALL TO PRAYER

*PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

*PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

*PASTOR: LET US PRAY.

*PRAYER AND PRAYER RESPONSE

OFFERING

DEFEY 'RY

"FORENER"

SPINOLER

BAPTISM OF INFANT

ANTHEM: "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY"

ARR. RINGWALD

SERMON: "ALTAR-RATIONS"

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 33 "THE LORD BE WITH US"

*BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN

ORGAN POSTLUDE: "TOCCATINA IN A MINOR" BAYLOR

----- *CONGREGATION STANDING -----

THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY

MR. & MRS. CHARLES FLEEGER IN MEMORY OF "LOVED ONES."

SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: *WALLY FEDER, JOHN SNOW,

MONT MACKINNEY, JAMES MALONEY, STEVE VARGO.

DEACON AND MRS. PAUL PFABE WILL REPRESENT COUNCIL AT

THE DOOR TODAY.

THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY WAS 189.

NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED TODAY BY: BARBARA VARGO

AND KAREN KENNEDY.

HOSPITALIZED: NORMA KNAUER TILL MON OR TUES.; HAROLD

SANDBACH, MRS. HEGINBOTHAM, MRS. MARGARET BALDAUF,

MRS. DOROTHY NICHOLAS - BOMH. MR. LEO BALDAUF AND

MR. GLENN DIMIT (VETS HOSPITAL). Mrs. Richard Nicholas

BAPTIZED TODAY: LORI LEE WEISENSTEIN, DAUGHTER OF

BOB AND MARY JANE WEISENSTEIN. THE SPONSORS: PAUL

AND VIRGINIA CARTER.

WED. - 7:30 - GOLDEN CIRCLE MEETING (NOTICE TIME CHANGE)

WED. - 8:00 - YOUTH ADVISORS MEETING

THURS. - 7:00 - BIBLE STUDY GROUP MEETS IN THE UNDER-

CROET - NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

THURS. - 11:00 - MARY MARTHA CIRCLE - TUREEN LUNCHEON,

AT Mrs. SARA SNOW'S HOME.

DON'T FORGET TO SAVE JAN. 26 - CONGREGATION DINNER

AND MEETING - YEARBOOKS WILL BE GIVEN OUT - ETC.

CHET STAUFFER WILL BE MC. DAN FILETTI - GUEST.

AS YOU NO DOUBT NOTICED - THE MATERIAL CAME IN FOR

THE NEWSLETTER - BIBLE READINGS - AFTER HALF OF THE

NEWSLETTERS WERE STAPLED TOGETHER - THESE WERE OPENED

AND RE-STAPLED WITH THE NEW MATERIAL TO START YOU

READING YOUR BIBLE EVERYDAY, AND AT THE END OF A YEAR'S

TIME YOU WILL HAVE READ THE BIBLE THROUGH.

MRS. MARY STEINHEISER WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THOSE

WHO SENT CARDS WHILE SHE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL AND

CONVALESCING.

) NEXT SUNDAY 6:00-7:00 - YOUTH CHOIR PRACTICE ()

welcome visitors/sign card or book

2 May that desire 2 share Gav with others when 3
occasion arise

(Illustration atheist)

(his exact oppos of all preceeding,
but contrast this with (Illustration woman
threat by husband)

Whif courage all need as Xpians
but it only courage cum when gathered strength
from being a worshipping Xpian
from coming to's House & getting "Alter-Rations",
& ~~xxx~~ then by letting the "Alter-Rations" trans-
form us,

so that we make "Alter-Rations2" in our lives
& thus share all of this with others.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.